

Message Text

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INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
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SUBJ: FRENCH-PAKISTAN REPROCESSING PLANT: LE MONDE,
AFP NEWS ARTICLES OF JAN 5 AND 6, 1978

REF: PARIS 615

SUMMARY: LE MONDE DATED JAN 6 (AVAILABLE JAN 5 PM)
CARRIED ARTICLE BY XAVIER WEEGER STATING THE CONTRACT
FOR THE PLANT HAD BEEN SUSPENDED ACCORDING TO RELIABLE
SOURCES (ARTICLE AT PARA 1). AFP WIRE SERVICE ON JAN 6
AT NOON CARRIED STORY FROM AN AUTHORIZED FRENCH SOURCE
STATING US AND FRANCE HAVE TALKED OF PRINCIPLES FOR
CONTROL OF NON-PROLIFERATION AND NOT SPECIFIC CONTRACTS
AND FRANCE-PAK CONVERSATIONS HAVE NOT STOPPED ON
IMPLEMENTING CONTRACT (STORY AT PARA 2). LE MONDE
DATED JAN 7 CARRIES LENGTHY ARTICLE BY WEEGER REPEATING
MUCH OF JAN 6 ARTICLE (STORY HIGHLIGHTS AT PARA 3).
TRANSLATIONS ARE INFORMAL. END SUMMARY.

1. LE MONDE JAN 6: FRANCE SEEKS RENEGOTIATION OF
NUCLEAR CONTRACT WITH PAKISTAN
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THE CONTRACT SIGNED BETWEEN FRANCE AND PAKISTAN,
PROVIDING FOR THE DELIVERY TO PAKISTAN OF A
RETREATMENT PLANT FOR NUCLEAR WASTES, IS IN SUSPENSE,
INDICATED RELIABLE SOURCES IN PARIS.
FRANCE, IT AFFIRMS, IS SEEKING TO RENEGOTIATE THIS
CONTRACT ON THE BASIS OF NEW PROPOSITIONS. IT COULD BE

A QUESTION, AMONG OTHERS, OF MAKING THE PAKISTANIS
ACCEPT THE PRINCIPLE OF A MODIFICATION OF THE PROCEDURE
OF RETREATMENT: THAT WOULD NOT RESULT IN THE
EXTRACTION OF PURE PLUTONIUM -- EASILY UTILISABLE IN THE
MANUFACTURE OF ATOMIC BOMBS -- BUT IN A MIXTURE OF
PLUTONIUM AND URANIUM (THE ANGLO-SAXONS CALL THIS
OPERATION COPROCESSING, AS OPPOSED TO CLASSICAL
RETREATMENT, REPROCESSING).

THE DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN FRANCE AND PAKISTAN FOR
THE DELIVERY OF A RETREATMENT PLANT BEGAN ABOUT 10 YEARS
AGO. ON THE FRENCH SIDE, IT IS SAINT-GOBAIN - TECHNIQUES
NOUVELLES, AN AFFILIATE OF SAINT-GOBAIN-PONT-A-MOUSSON,
WHO NEGOTIATED WITH THE PAKISTAN ATOMIC ENERGY
COMMISSION; THIS SOCIETY, WHICH BUILT THE FRENCH
RETREATMENT PLANTS AT MARCOULE AND LA HAGUE, HAS
RECENTLY BEEN PLACED UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE ATOMIC
ENERGY COMMISSION. THE COMMERCIAL AGREEMENT, SIGNED THE
BEGINNING OF 1976, BY A TRIPARTITE AGREEMENT BETWEEN
THE GOVERNMENTS OF FRANCE AND PAKISTAN AND THE
INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY, AN AGREEMENT
DESTINED TO PROHIBIT ANY DIVERSION OF THIS
INSTALLATION TOWARD MILITARY ENDS.

THE OPPOSITION OF THE UNITED STATES TO THIS
CONTRACT -- A RETREATMENT PLANT PERMITTING THE
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EXTRACTION OF PLUTONIUM FORMED IN IRRADIATED RODS
UTILIZED BY THE NUCLEAR CENTERS -- HAD BEEN STRONGLY
EXPRESSED, IN PARTICULAR DURING THE SPRING OF 1976, BY
MR. HENRY KISSINGER, THEN SECRETARY OF STATE. THE
CARTER ADMINISTRATION CONTINUED TOTALLY THIS
OPPOSITION: THIS ADMINISTRATION WHICH DECIDED IN
APRIL 1977 TO STOP ALL CIVIL RETREATMENT ON AMERICAN
SOIL, HAD BESIDES WELCOMED FAVORABLY THE FRENCH
DECISION, ANNOUNCED AT THE END OF THE INTERNATIONAL
COUNCIL ON NUCLEAR EXPORT POLICY MEETING DEC 16, 1976
NOT TO SIGN ANY NEW CONTRACTS FOR THE EXPORTATION OF
RETREATMENT INSTALLATIONS.

UNTIL NOW, FRANCE HAS ALWAYS REPEATED THAT IT

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INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

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WOULD HONOR THE CONTRACT SIGNED WITH PAKISTAN. FOR SOME MONTHS NOW, HOWEVER, AND NOTABLY SINCE THE FALL OF MR. BHUTTO'S GOVERNMENT, IT HAS BECOME CLEAR THAT PARIS WOULD WELCOME WITH A CERTAIN RELIEF A PAKISTANI BACKING OFF.

2. AFP JAN 6, 1236 HRS: THE NUCLEAR CONTRACT BETWEEN FRANCE AND PAKISTAN: FRENCH CLARIFICATION

FOLLOWING INFORMATION PUBLISHED THURSDAY ON A POSSIBLE SUSPENSION OF THE NUCLEAR CONTRACT CONCLUDED BETWEEN FRANCE AND PAKISTAN (NOTABLY PROVIDING FOR THE SUPPLY OF A RETREATMENT PLANT) - NOTABLY TO RESPOND TO AMERICAN PREOCCUPATIONS ON NON-PROLIFERATION - AN AUTHORIZED FRENCH SOURCE STATES:

1 - THAT FRANCO-AMERICAN CONVERSATIONS DWELT UPON THE PRINCIPLES WHICH CAN CONTROL NON-PROLIFERATION AND NOT ON SPECIFIC AND INDIVIDUAL CONTRACTS.

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2 - THAT REGARDING THE FRANCO-PAKISTANI CONTRACT, SIGNED THE BEGINNING OF 1976, THE CONVERSATIONS BETWEEN FRANCE AND PAKISTAN HAVE NOT CEASED ON METHODS OF APPLICATION AND ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONTRACT.

3. LE MONDE, JAN 7 (HIGHLIGHTS OF ARTICLE):

RENEGOTIATION OF THE FRANCO-PAKISTANI CONTRACT
PARIS AND WASHINGTON POSITIONS ON NUCLEAR NON-
PROLIFERATION SEEM TO GET CLOSER

ACCORDING TO RELIABLE PARIS SOURCES, THE CONTRACT SIGNED IN 1976 BY FRANCE AND PAKISTAN FOR THE DELIVERY OF A REPROCESSING PLANT IS SUSPENDED. IT IS STATED THAT FRANCE IS TRYING TO RENEGOTIATE THIS CONTRACT ON THE BASIS OF NEW PROPOSALS PROVIDING FOR THE MODIFICATION OF THE REPROCESSING PROCESS WHEREBY PURE PLUTONIUM (WHICH CAN BE USED EASILY FOR THE MANUFACTURE OF ATOMIC BOMBS) WOULD NOT BE SEPARATED, BUT A MIXTURE WOULD BE FORMED OF PLUTONIUM AND URANIUM - COPROCESSING AS OPPOSED TO REPROCESSING. IN FACT, ONE WONDERS WHETHER THIS CONTRACT WILL EVER BE PERFORMED AS FRENCH AND AMERICAN POSITIONS ON THE FIGHT AGAINST NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION SEEM TO DRAW CLOSER.

FRANCE'S WISH TO RENEGOTIATE THE NUCLEAR CONTRACT WITH PAKISTAN ADDS ONE MORE CHAPTER TO A LONG STORY, WHICH HAS BEEN GOING ON FOR TEN YEARS. AT THE END OF THE SIXTIES, NO ONE EXPRESSED ANY CONCERN ABOUT SUCH A PLANT BUT DISCUSSIONS LASTED LONG ENOUGH TO ALLOW FOR A CHANGE ON THE INTERNATIONAL SCENE. FOR EXAMPLE IN 1970, THE NPT WAS SIGNED. IN 1974, INDIA - THE POWERFUL NEIGHBOR OF PAKISTAN - WHICH AS WELL AS PAKISTAN DID NOT SIGN THE NPT - EXPLODED A NUCLEAR DEVICE. THIS CREATED UNCLASSIFIED

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A GREAT STIR AND LED TO THE CREATION OF THE CLUB OF COUNTRIES EXPORTING NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY, CALLED THE LONDON CLUB, WHICH RECENTLY PUBLISHED A KIND OF CHARTER.

IN 1976, PARIS, NOTING SOME DANGER, TRIED TO DISCOURAGE PAKISTAN FROM PROCEEDING, BUT WITHOUT SUCCESS.

AT THE BEGINNING OF 1976, A COMMERCIAL AGREEMENT WAS SIGNED BETWEEN SAINT-GOBAIN-TECHNIQUES NOUVELLES, A SUBSIDIARY OF SAINT-GOBAIN-PONT-A-MOUSSON, WHICH HAD BUILT THE FRENCH REPROCESSING FACILITIES OF MARCOULE AND LA HAGUE, AND THE PAKISTAN COMMISSION FOR ATOMIC ENERGY. ON MARCH 18, 1976, A TRILATERAL AGREEMENT BETWEEN FRANCE, PAKISTAN AND THE IAEA COMPLETED THE CONTRACT, PUTTING THE FUTURE PLANT UNDER INTERNATIONAL CONTROL TO GUARANTEE ITS USE FOR PEACEFUL PURPOSES EXCLUSIVELY.

DURING THE SUMMER OF 1976, THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT,

THROUGH ITS SECRETARY OF STATE HENRY KISSINGER,
EXPRESSED ITS DISAPPROVAL AND EVER SINCE HAS EXERTED
PRESSURE ON THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT AS WELL AS THE
PAKISTAN GOVERNMENT. FOR EXAMPLE, WASHINGTON OFFERED
TO SUPPLY PAKISTAN WITH 110 A-7 ATTACK PLANES IF THEY
GAVE UP THE CONTRACT.

NO ECONOMIC JUSTIFICATION

TO SAY THE LEAST THE FRENCH CASE WAS NOT GOOD.

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PAKISTAN HAS NO ECONOMIC NEED WHICH JUSTIFIES THE
BUILDING OF A REPROCESSING PLANT; SUCH A PLANT MAKES NO
SENSE, CONSIDERING CURRENT TECHNIQUES, SINCE THERE IS
NO BREEDER REACTOR PROGRAM. PAKISTAN DID NOT SIGN THE
NPT AND INDIA HAS THE BOMB . . . FEARS EXPRESSED BY THE
AMERICANS ARE JUSTIFIED - IF NOT COMPLETELY (SINCE THE
FACILITY WILL BE UNDER INTERNATIONAL CONTROL) - AT LEAST
THEY CAN BE UNDERSTOOD.

ON DECEMBER 16, 1976, THE FRENCH MINISTERIAL
COUNCIL ON NUCLEAR EXPORT POLICY DECIDED THAT NO FURTHER
CONTRACTS FOR THE SUPPLY OF REPROCESSING PLANTS WOULD
BE SIGNED. HOWEVER IT WAS STATED THAT THE CONTRACT
BETWEEN PARIS AND ISLAMABAD WOULD BE FULFILLED -- AND

THIS WAS AGAIN REPEATED BY MR. DE GUIRINGAUD TO HIS PAKISTAN COLLEAGUE, MR. AGHA SHAHI, ON SEPT 9. THE FACT IS THAT AT THE SAME TIME OTHER DISCUSSIONS DEALING WITH THE SECAM PROCESS, DELIVERY OF WEAPONS AND CAR CONSTRUCTION WERE ALSO TAKING PLACE, AND THIS MAY EXPLAIN THAT STATEMENT.

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TODAY, IT SEEMS THAT A NEW OFFENSIVE IS LAUNCHED AND THAT PARIS MAY NOT DELIVER THE PROMISED PLANT. THE NEW PROPOSALS REGARDING THE REDESIGNING OF THE PLANT SO AS NOT TO PRODUCE PLUTONIUM AND URANIUM BUT A MIXTURE OF THESE TWO ELEMENTS, WHICH ARE DIFFICULT TO SEPARATE, DO NOT SEEM APRIORI TO SATISFY PAKISTAN.

IT DOES NOT SEEM THAT BY GIVING UP THIS CONTRACT, FRANCE'S POSITION WILL BE IN THE NEAR FUTURE IN LINE WITH THE AMERICAN POSITION. IT IS IN FACT LOGICALLY IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE FRENCH DECISION OF DEC 16, 1976, AND FRANCE'S POSITIONS ON OTHER PROBLEMS LINKED WITH PROLIFERATION HAVE HARDLY CHANGED SINCE.

THE AMERICAN FLEXIBILITY

ON THE CONTRARY, IT SEEMS THAT SINCE MR. CARTER'S ARRIVAL AT THE WHITE HOUSE, THE AMERICAN POSITION HAS BECOME MORE FLEXIBLE ON SEVERAL POINTS. LAST APRIL, PRESIDENT CARTER ANNOUNCED HIS NEW POLICY: REPROCESSING FOR CIVILIAN PURPOSES WOULD BE STOPPED, THE COMMERCIAL PHASE OF THE AMERICAN BREEDER PROGRAM WOULD BE POSTPONED AND HE CLEARLY EXPRESSED HIS INTENTION TO HAVE HIS COUNTRY'S EXAMPLE FOLLOWED BY OTHERS. TODAY, HE HAS GIVEN IT UP. THE US HAS FINALLY AUTHORIZED THE JAPANESE TO START THEIR SMALL REPROCESSING PLANT BUILT BY FRANCE AT TOKAI-MURA. OF SIGNIFICANCE, THE US ACCEPTED FRENCH REQUIREMENTS REGARDING INFCE, WHICH THEY HAD INITIATED, WHEREBY THE PROGRAM WOULD HAVE NO CONSEQUENCE ON CURRENT NUCLEAR PROGRAMS AND THAT ITS CONCLUSIONS WOULD NOT COMMIT THE FORTY OR SO PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES. MORE RECENTLY, THE US GAVE UP

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IMPOSING THEIR WILL ON INDIA.

THEY ALSO HAD TO ACCEPT THE FACT THAT FRANCE WAS

OFFERING TO SEVERAL COUNTRIES TO REPROCESS IMPORTANT QUANTITIES OF NUCLEAR FUELS AT LA HAGUE.

IT SEEMS, THEREFORE, THAT BOTH THE FRENCH AND THE AMERICAN POSITIONS ARE GETTING CLOSER BUT IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO TELL WHICH OF THE TWO PARTNERS YIELDED MORE

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TO THE OTHER. THERE IS STILL ONE IMPORTANT DIFFICULTY, WHICH LOOKS HARD TO SOLVE TODAY. WASHINGTON WANTED THAT ALL EXPORTS OF NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY INCLUDE THE ACCEPTANCE OF THE IMPORTING COUNTRY OF INTERNATIONAL SAFEGUARDS ON ALL NUCLEAR FACILITIES IN THE IMPORTING COUNTRY. PARIS, ON THE OTHER HAND, AGREED TO INTERNATIONAL SAFEGUARDS ON THE EXPORTED MATERIAL ONLY BUT HELD - AND STILL HOLDS - THAT THERE IS NO REASON TO FORBID A COUNTRY TO GET NUCLEAR WEAPONS THROUGH ITS OWN NATIONAL RESOURCES. IT IS PARIS THINKING THAT THERE IS NO REASON TO FORBID NUCLEAR ENERGY TO THOSE COUNTRIES WHO HAVE NOT ADHERED TO THE NPT UNDER THE PROVISIONS THAT THEY ACCEPT INTERNATIONAL CONTROL ON THE IMPORTED MATERIAL - ONLY ON IT.

EVEN IF THIS PROBLEM REMAINS, THERE IS STILL ROOM FOR INCREASED INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN THE FIELD OF

THE FIGHT AGAINST PROLIFERATION, FOR EXAMPLE, THROUGH
MULTINATIONAL NUCLEAR FUEL CENTERS OR AN
INTERNATIONAL NUCLEAR FUEL BANK. IT WILL PROBABLY
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TAKE TIME BEFORE SUCH IDEAS TAKE SHAPE BUT THERE WILL BE
MORE AND MORE TALK ABOUT THEM.

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